cooperation, including India's assistance for development of curriculum for technical institutions in Sri Lanka and for devising a school assessment system, joint production of films, dramas and television software. A draft Cultural Exchange Programme, valid for next three years, was also discussed.

China's view about minimum nuclear deterrence for India

1753. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "China against minimum N-deterrence for India" as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 28th January, 1999;

(b) if so, whether China has opposed any deal to allow India to have minimum nuclear deterrence in return for joining CTBT; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government on such opposition made by China?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Government has seen press reports cited above.

(c) Government did not subscribe to the UN Security Council Resolution 1172, which therefore, cannot provide a basis for our ongoing dialogue with key interlocutors. We are currently engaged in these dialogues on the basis of a set of proposals made by India which clearly envisage, inter alia, the maintenance by India of a minimum credible nuclear deterrent.

Visit to South Korea

1754. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of External has visited South Korea recently; and

(b) if so, the details of achievements made during the visit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Minister of External Affairs has not visited the Republic of Korea (ROK) since he assumed office. However, the Minister of State for External Affairs [MOS (EA)] paid an official visit to ROK from 21 to 24 January 1999. MOS(EA) called on the Prime Minister of ROK and conveyed PM's invitation to the ROK Prime Minister to visit India in February 1999. She also met the Minister of Foreign Affairs & Trade and the Minister of State for Trade of ROK. The discussions focussed on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. MOS(EA) met the members of Korea-India Society and the Korea-India Business Council and held discussions with them on the strengthening of friendship and cooperation between our peoples and countries.

The visit has contributed to strengthening bilateral relations with ROK which is one of India's major economic partners. The Prime Minister of ROK visited India on 10-11 February 1999 in response to PM's invitation.

Permanent Membership of the Security Council

1755. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of progress being made for permanent seat of India in the Security Council;

(b) which countries have supported India for permanent place in Security Council;

(c) which countries have opposed; and

(d) what steps Government are taking for securing permanent place in the Security Council?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) UN Security Council restructuring and expansion is being discussed in the